

# Creative Lab North

## Needs Assessment

September 2020

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Prepared for  
Creative Lab North Society

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# Acknowledgements

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**We are grateful to live, work, meet and travel on the Traditional Territories of the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation, self-governing nations that negotiated modern treaties (2002; 2005) under the Umbrella Final Agreement (1993) between the 14 Yukon First Nations and the Governments of Canada and Yukon.**

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Canada Council  
for the Arts

Conseil des arts  
du Canada





# Methodology

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TOWARD BUILDING CREATIVE LAB NORTH

# Methodology

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- Ongoing conversations and information gathering among creative, arts and culture and individuals (since 2015)
- Secured funding for a summit to articulate needs and explore feasibility
- Connect our work to the findings from the Government of Yukon 2019 research on the Creative and Cultural Industries (disclosure: research and facilitation by Inga Petri)
- Explore external factors affecting the Yukon, creative and cultural industries
- Quantify the creative and cultural sectors and inventory cultural spaces in Whitehorse
- **Digital Working Summit (weekly, June 30 to August 25)**
  - What's the big idea for Creative Lab North?
  - Examples of creative hubs workings to understand proof points needed (Jerry McGrath, Toronto)
  - Financing, capital and operating info (Roxanne Duncan, Vancouver)
  - Dimensions of impact; training, learning and collaboration
  - Users and Audiences (Willow Lacosse, KDCC; Lana Selbee, Yukonstruct; Andrea Simpson-Fowler, Heart of Riverdale)
  - Governance, leadership, management (Melaina Sheldon; Jacob Zimmer, Nakai; Al Cushing; Roxanne Duncan)
  - Review needs and feasibility documentation with working group



# Table of Contents

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- **Our context**
  - Quantify cultural sector in Yukon
  - Population trends to 2030 / 2040
  - Climate Change, Digital Economy, Housing and Employment, COVID-19
- **Building a thriving arts and creative eco-system in the Yukon**
  - Specific needs identified: What We Heard (YG study) and CLN study
  - Cultural spaces inventory in Whitehorse – and how they don't meet the increasing needs
  - What are the ingredients that let creativity and innovation thrive?
  - Eco-system approach
- **Inspiring examples from small, rural and remote communities across Canada**





# Needs Assessment

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CONTEXT

## 2017 – Yukon Culture GDP \$58.4 mil (2.3%)

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Canada's culture GDP shrank by 1.3% 2016 to 2017 and reached \$53.1 bil (2.6%)

800 culture jobs in Yukon (3.6% of workforce)

Many more work part-time, do gigs, volunteer in arts and culture sectors

2019 report on Creative and Cultural Industries (YG)  
suggests that these industries not only make an important contribution  
to the Yukon, but are poised for growth; not only regaining lost ground  
since the 2008 financial crisis but significantly expanding

[https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/ybs/gdp\\_2018.pdf](https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/ybs/gdp_2018.pdf)

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/190425/dq190425b-eng.htm>



# 2018 – Yukon Gross Domestic Product

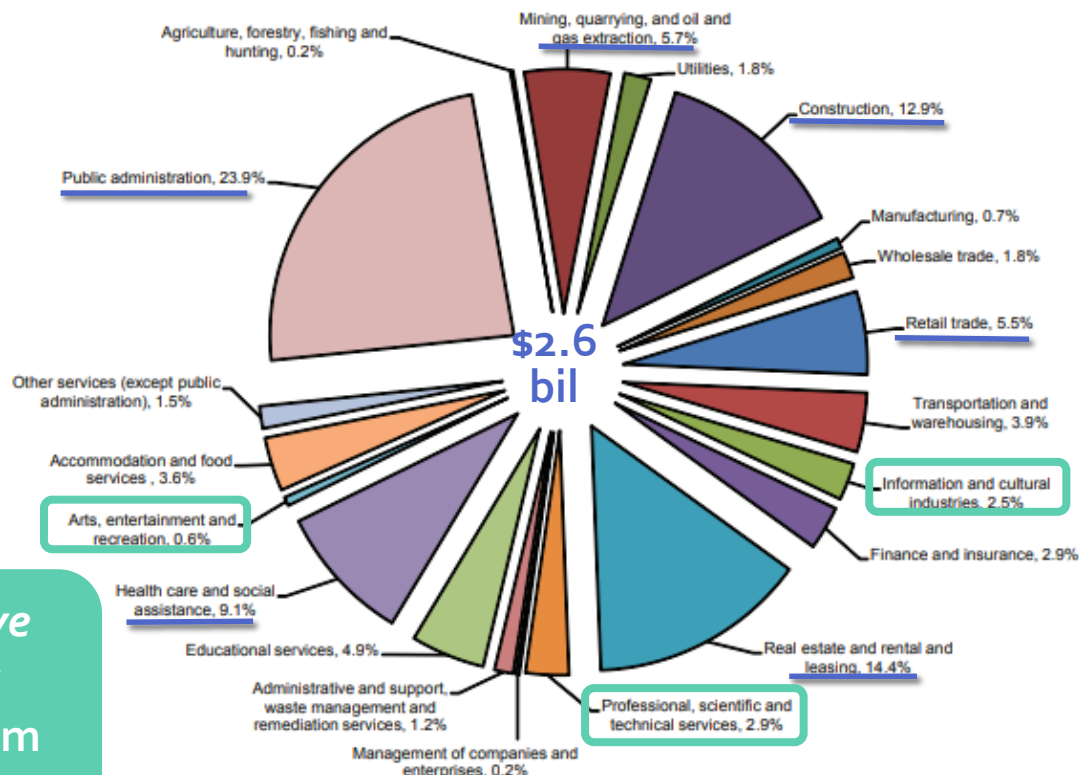
## Largest sectors

1. Public administration
2. Real estate
3. Construction
4. Health and social
5. Mining
6. Retail

Opportunity space: *Creative Lab North* catalyst to grow creative industries (arts, film & sound, media, applied arts)

- Year-round, Export, Not cyclical
- Support local business, Increase tax base

Percentage Share of GDP by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), Yukon, 2018 (based on current dollars)



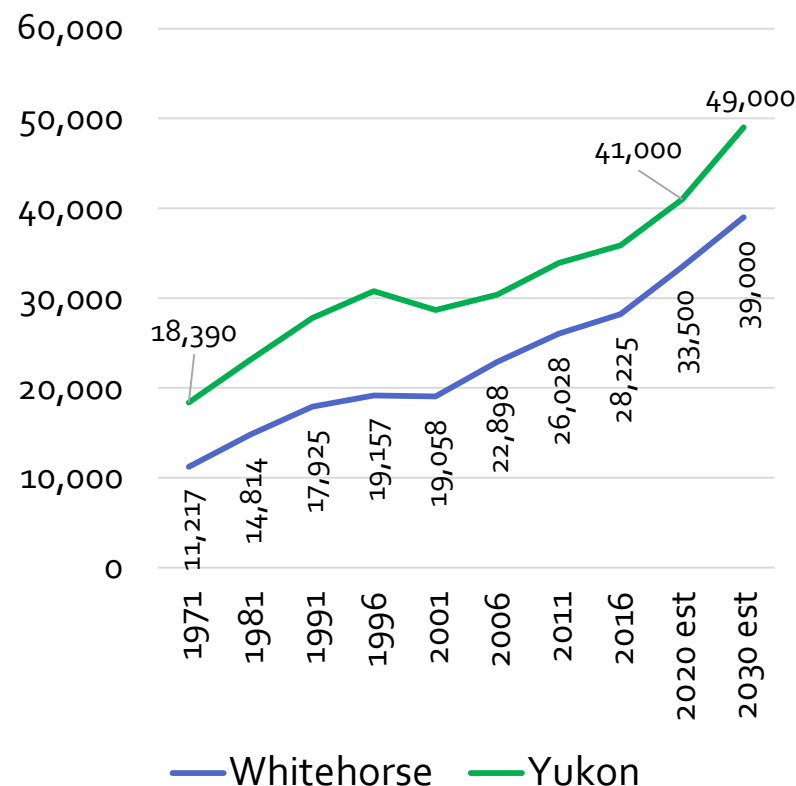
[https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/ybs/gdp\\_2018.pdf](https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/ybs/gdp_2018.pdf)



# External factors: A growing city and territory

- Yukon's population has more than doubled in the last 45 years; while Whitehorse has tripled.
- We are tracking ahead of the high growth estimate based on the 2016 population projection to 2030.
  - Adjusted figures in 2018 project significant further growth of population in next decade according to preferred medium projection: Yukon 49,000 by 2030; 56,000 by 2040 – 80 % in Whitehorse
  - Updated high projection is 52,000 by 2030 and 62,000 by for 2040
  - Demand for new infrastructure, development land, housing, increasing services, high quality of life supporting activities will accelerate
- Of note: Yukon Arts Centre was built 1992 when there were 18,000 residents in Whitehorse. More than 75,000 visits to the galleries and performing arts in 2018-19. This audience is primarily local.

Population development since 1971 (Census data)



<https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/ybs/fin-population-projections-2016-2030.pdf>  
<https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/ybs/fin-population-projections-2018-2040.pdf>

# External Factors: Digital Economy

## BURGEONING ECONOMY

### Statistics Canada reports

- Digital is not an industry but a way to do business in every industry
- “Growth of digital economic activities outpaces economy-wide gross domestic product”
- “Digital economy job growth more than four times that of the total economy”
- Yukon, Nunavut, Manitoba saw slower digital economy growth from 2010 to 2017 when compared with economy-wide GDP

## YUKON'S DIGITAL DISADVANTAGE

- Whitehorse and the communities have expensive, data capped internet options.
  - “Twice as expensive for half the capacity”
- Outside downtown Whitehorse, internet speeds are slow running on older generations of DSL and Satellite Internet.
- Before the rush to digital due to COVID-19, only 30% of Yukon businesses had a website
  - Few websites are take advantage of semantic web methods to secure discoverability in future

## 5G CONNECTIVITY = DIGITAL IMPERATIVE

- 5G is rolling out in Southern Canada and the world.
- 5G promises 1,000x faster internet than 4G LTE
- New businesses and business models will emerge

### Potential digital applications

- 3D streaming
- Live streaming Virtual Reality experiences
- Real-life, real-time Augmented Reality applications

**A well-functioning digital economy diversifies the Yukon's largely cyclical economy with specialized digital technology businesses and well-paying, private sector**

# External Factors: Climate Change

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- **Climate change impacts the North disproportionately: Yukon's average temperature increased 2.3°C and in winter are 4.8°C higher (1948 to 2016).**
- **Adaptation and mitigation challenges are considerable in the Yukon**
  - Thawing permafrost, melting glaciers, changes in rain and snow fall, changes in flora and fauna
  - More extreme weather including wild fires can threaten infrastructure
  - Impacts include damage to infrastructure, affect water quality and availability, adverse health effects
  - Extreme weather, drought, desertification in other latitudes will displace people and communities; some will seek a new life in the Yukon.
- **Remote living has relied on GHG-intensive travel to gain access to market and essential services**
  - Local market is too small for most types of businesses
  - Shipping is expensive; travel adds expense and time
  - The performing arts touring sector was already under pressure to re-imagine touring in the age of climate change
- **Digital economy presents a significant and under-developed opportunity for the Yukon**
  - Investing in digital technologies, advanced digital knowledge for people and digitally powered businesses is one of the best ways to ensure sustainable economic activities in the North.

<https://yukon.ca/en/climate-change-yukon#how-climate-change-impacts-yukon>

# External Factors: Housing and Employment

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- Yukon's rapidly growing population has been putting pressure on infrastructure, housing availability and increased demand for goods and services
- **Labour force**
  - 44% of labour force employed by one of four levels of government
  - Of those in the private sector: 32% are self-employed (23% Canada)
  - Yukon has highest labour force participation rate in Canada and lowest unemployment rate
- **Housing October 2019**
  - Vacancy rate for rentals in Whitehorse was 2.5% overall
  - Median rent in Whitehorse is \$1,099
  - Average real estate sales
    - Single detached house \$529,500 (record-high - 10.5% higher than 2018)
    - Mobile home \$341,300 (record-high) // Duplex \$378,700 // Condo \$354,700
- **Need to ensure growth in housing in tandem with increased population**

[https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/ybs/real\\_estate\\_q219\\_r.pdf](https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/ybs/real_estate_q219_r.pdf)


[https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/ybs/rent\\_oct19.pdf](https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/ybs/rent_oct19.pdf)

[https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/ybs/employment\\_aug20.pdf](https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/ybs/employment_aug20.pdf)

# External Factors: COVID-19 = Life *is* Digital

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- COVID-19 = digital learning, working, shopping, banking, connecting, socializing
- Several sectors in dire straits due to longer terms restrictions and bans: travel/tourism, hospitality (dine-in restaurants, accommodations), events (live performing arts, sports, conferences)
- While societies (including the Yukon where COVID-19 cases have been contained so far), learn to live with COVID-19 it is increasingly clear that pandemic-readiness / infectious disease readiness has greatly gained in importance
- Anticipated mid- and long-term considerations
  - Changes in building designs
    - Net Zero from an energy consumption and Greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate climate change
    - Improvements to HVAC in light of air-borne transmission of infectious diseases
  - Physical gatherings restricted/ a pod approach suited for physical distancing as needed
    - Meeting and collaborative spaces may become larger, presentation and event spaces with flexible seating
    - Offices may become more closed door spaces; creation of protective zones for front line staff
    - Increase digital connectivity options within and across work spaces
  - As more Yukoners than average already are self-employed and work from home, the new emphasis on working from home offices may not have as great an affect as elsewhere in the private sector.
- Digital life will persist in the new Normal, requiring far greater access to digital expertise and creatives working in digital media



# Building a thriving arts and creative ecosystem in the Yukon

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**SUITABLE SPACE A KEY LIMITATION FOR  
DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH**

# What We Heard – Government of Yukon

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- During 2019 Government of Yukon undertook research and extensive territory-wide public engagement sessions to form the underpinnings of a forthcoming Creative and Cultural Industries Strategy
  - What We Heard Report detailing results were released in February 2020
  - Creative Lab North participated and has been inspired by these conversations
- The need for dedicated space was one of the most commented on topics from the public engagement.
  - Strong desire to develop a multi-disciplinary creative hub by and for arts, creative and cultural industries to advance their practice and viability.
  - The size and scope of a multi-disciplinary hub were discussed in terms of financing the capital expenditures as well as what the long-term costs to operate and maintain the space are.



# What We Heard – Government of Yukon

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## Upside

Many existing spaces across Yukon facilitate and enable creative and artistic development. Facilities such as YAC and KIAC are the foundations and instigators for much of the creative sector.

YAC is the territory's sole professional performance venue; its recently created residency program at Old Fire Hall provides access to local theatre makers and performance artists.

First Nations cultural centres have been becoming central gathering places and event hosts, and work collaboratively with others to share knowledge and resources.



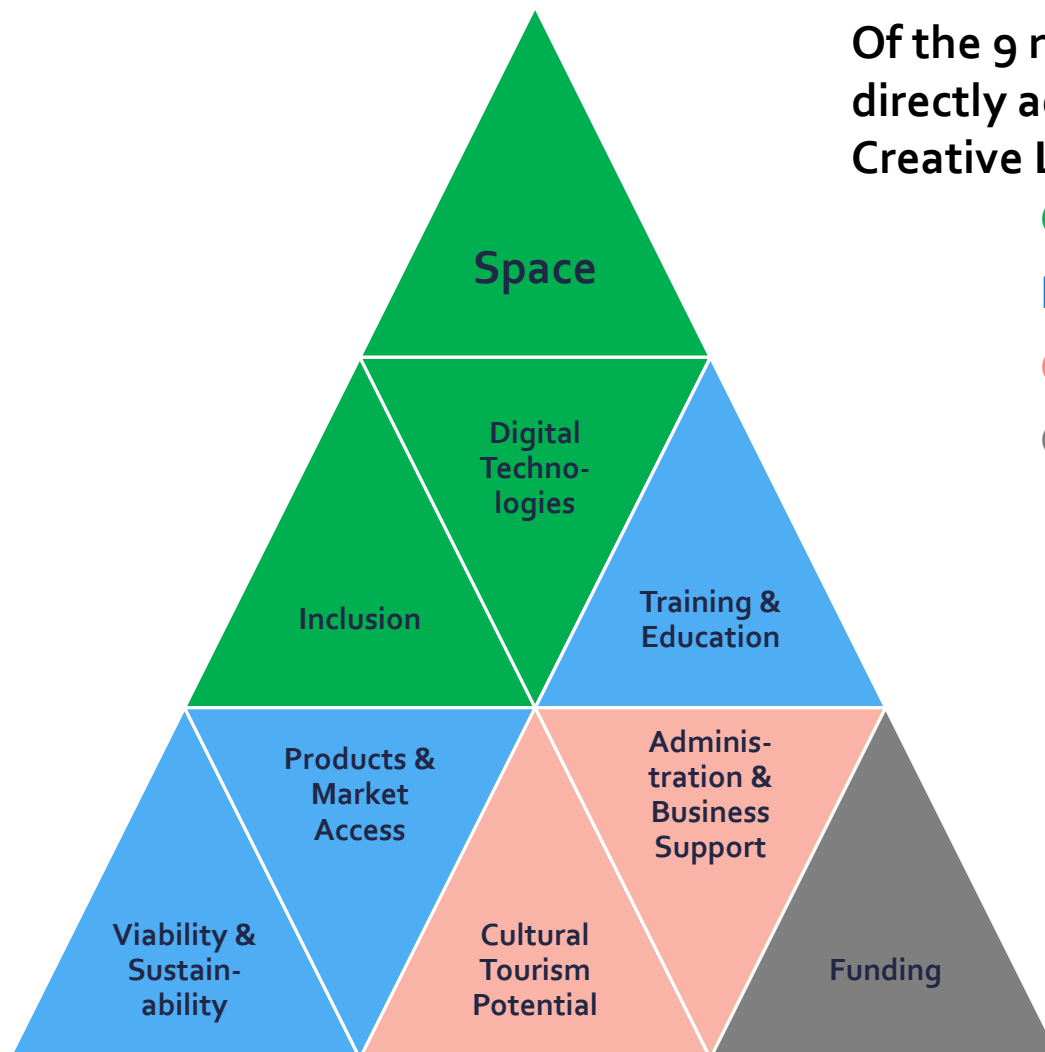
## Downside

Many existing arts facilities are aging and don't fully meet user's functional needs. Investments are required to maintain these spaces. There are limitations and capacity issues with existing infrastructure that can't meet the current demands of industry.

Even with investments in existing infrastructure to make them more usable and to grow and reach their full potential (in size, equipment and programming), demand outstrips current supply of space.

In order to continue to collect and share visual art, new storage space is required as current vaults are nearing capacity.

# What We Heard and Relevance to CLN



Of the 9 major topics, all but two are directly addressed by realizing Creative Lab North

Core mission

Enabled by new facility

CLN users could offer services

Grey not applicable

Creative Lab North has the opportunity to be the catalyst for and the hub of the emergent creative eco-system in the Yukon.

# Unmet Space Needs Are Congruent

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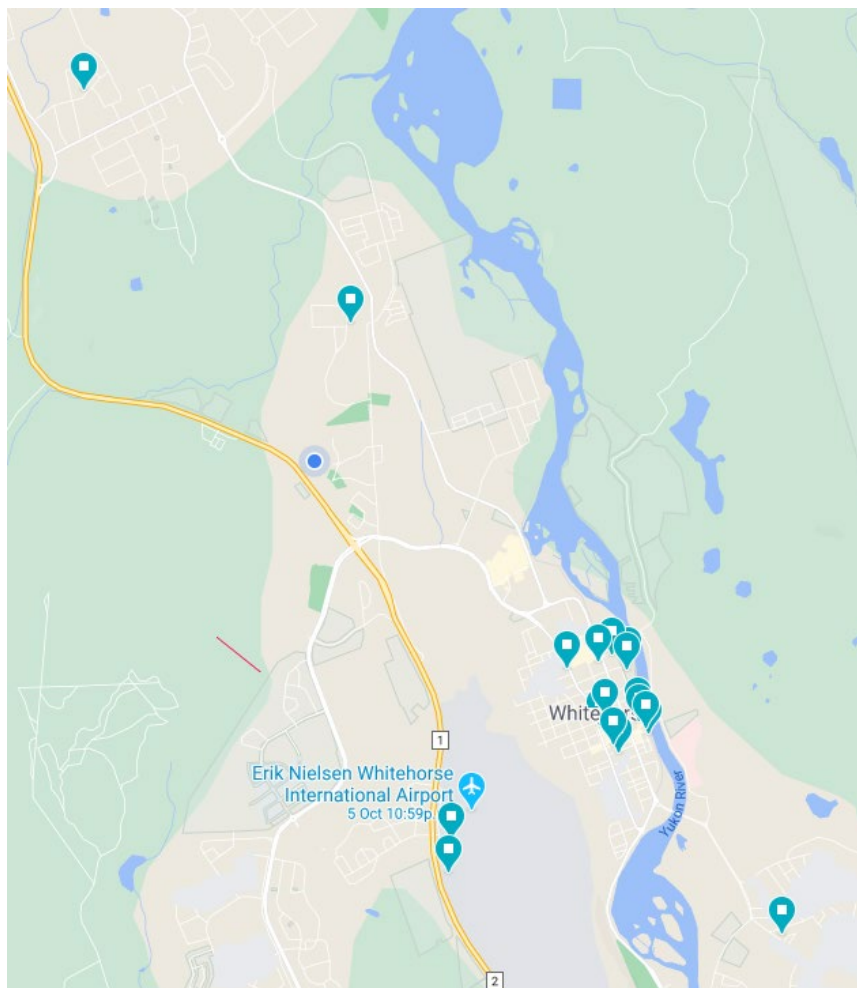
## WHAT WE HEARD – GOVT OF YUKON

- Access to clean, secure, flexible, affordable space was identified across Whitehorse, and the Yukon.
- Collaborative space that is well-equipped to meet the specific needs of the various industries.
- Provide studio space, temporary housing and facilitate all aspects of the creative value chain.
- Central location with barrier-free access and are simple to book.
- Accessible to the public with space that facilitates this type of connection and interaction, whether through retail or presentation of arts and creative outputs.
- Shared office spaces with administration support and access to professionals such as lawyers and accountants.
- Open year-round, 24 hours a day

## CREATIVE LAB NORTH – IDENTIFIED NEEDS

- Collaborative work environment with shared meeting spaces and private work spaces that brings together a critical mass of independent creatives, artists and small companies with digital technologies.
- Governed with strong voice of users, not merely the facility manager
- Specific spaces
  - Digital studios for creation and production
    - Leading digital technologies used in creation, production and presentation of virtual reality, augmented reality, 3D Motion Capture, gaming
  - Rehearsal spaces for live and recording arts
  - Green Screen / Soundstage for film and video
  - Professional black box theatre ~ 125 to 300 flexible seats with full backstage
  - Repertory cinema
  - Large tailored storage areas

# Cultural Spaces Inventory



- **18 public arts and cultural spaces in Whitehorse**
  - 5 outside the downtown core
    - The Guild, Porter Creek
    - Yukon Arts Centre
    - Heart of Riverdale
    - Yukon Transportation Museum
    - Beringia Interpretive Centre
- **Several private creative and applied arts companies in private offices – architecture, photography, design, advertising, web development**
- **Home-based businesses strongly represented in all sectors**

# Cultural Spaces Inventory

## ■ Yukon Arts Centre

- Yukon's professional theatre
- 428 seat theatre, studio theatre (rehearsal space, small meetings – 40 to 100 seats), public and community gallery, Yukon Permanent Collection. New residency program facilitates access to resources by local artists. Live streaming concerts.

## ■ Old Fire Hall

- Found space, repurposed as an arts and culture space, managed by YAC. Rental facility with temporary stage and flexible seating. No backstage/wings. 120 seats. Used for a variety of events including some theatre, concerts

## ■ Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre

- Rental facility for concerts, Adaka and Rendezvous festivals and other events

## ■ The Guild Hall, Porter Creek

- Bringing professional quality Community Theatre to Whitehorse. Presents 4 shows a year, 3 week runs. Also some other arts community use for short runs, concerts.

## ■ Black Box theatre at the Heart of Riverdale (built by Larriken Entertainment)

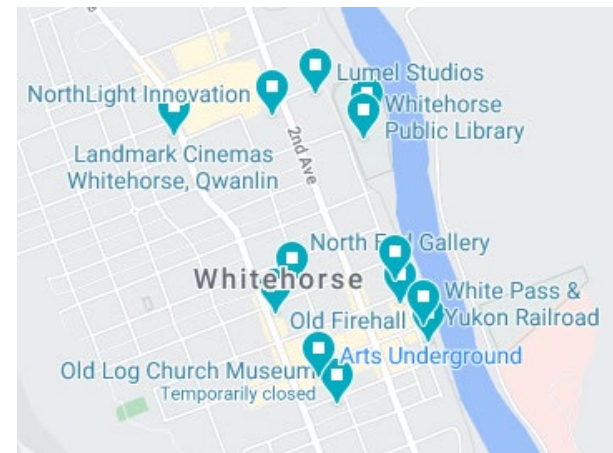
- Landmark Cinemas – commercial cinemas first run movies, not usually used by local arts organizations
- Several bars, restaurants and hotels normally feature live music – about 10 regular spots

## ■ Visual Arts

- Yukon Artists @ Work
- Arts underground
- North End Gallery
- Lumel Studio

## ■ Museums

- MacBride Museum
- Yukon Transportation Museum
- Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre
- Old Log Church Museum



## ■ Whitehorse Library

- Meeting rooms

## ■ WPYR Building

- Office space for arts and cultural organizations

## ■ Yukonconstruct/Northlight

- Rental for class and meeting rooms

## ■ Yukonconstruct Cospace

- fully subscribed

## ■ Yukonconstruct Makerspace

- fully subscribed

# Cultural Spaces Size,

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- **Yukon Arts Centre (1993)**

- \$9 million to build in 1992-93
- \$873,000 annual operating from YG
- 10 to 12 staff

- **Old Fire Hall (1901)**

- \$175,000 annual programming from YG

- **Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre**

- About 20,000 sq feet
- 8 to 10 staff

- **KIAC, Dawson City**

- \$425,000 operating
- 6 staff

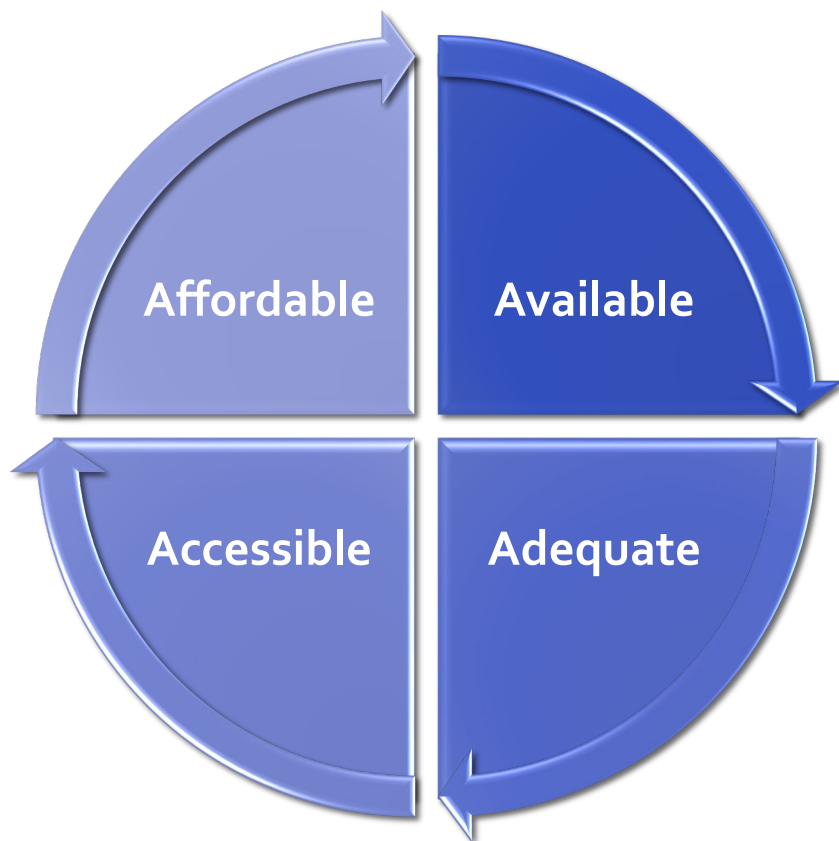
- **Heart of Riverdale**

- Renting about 21,000 sq feet
- 40 staff

- **Yukonstruct/Northlight**

- 24,000 square feet
- CanNor: \$2.5 mil
- Govt of Yukon \$1.95 mil
- YG annual budget
  - MakerSpace Society \$150,000
  - Yukon Canada Business Centre \$200,000
- 10 to 12 staff

# Persistent Gaps Limit Development



- **Artistic and cultural production and presentation is held back by lack of suitable infrastructure, limiting industry development**
  - Lack of a complete ecosystems in several creative industries – film making, digital media production, video games, publishing – that could create ongoing work for artists and creatives who can work in several of these related sectors.
  - Lack of space to present independent theatre in a venue suited for 2 to 3 week runs which require about 4 additional weeks for rehearsals and set building – need 100 to 250 seat black box theatre.
- **Lack of shared spaces where creativity and innovation can thrive through collaboration and access to advanced digital technologies**
  - In 2015 Creative Lab idea was part of cospace under the leadership of Jayden Soroka. As cospace evolved and collocated with Yukonstruct's Makerspace at its Northlight Innovation Centre creatives were replaced by consultants and other small entrepreneurs.
  - Northlight does not serve the arts and creative community effectively as it reached capacity quickly and turnover is low.
  - Digital and media technologies are not a focus at Northlight





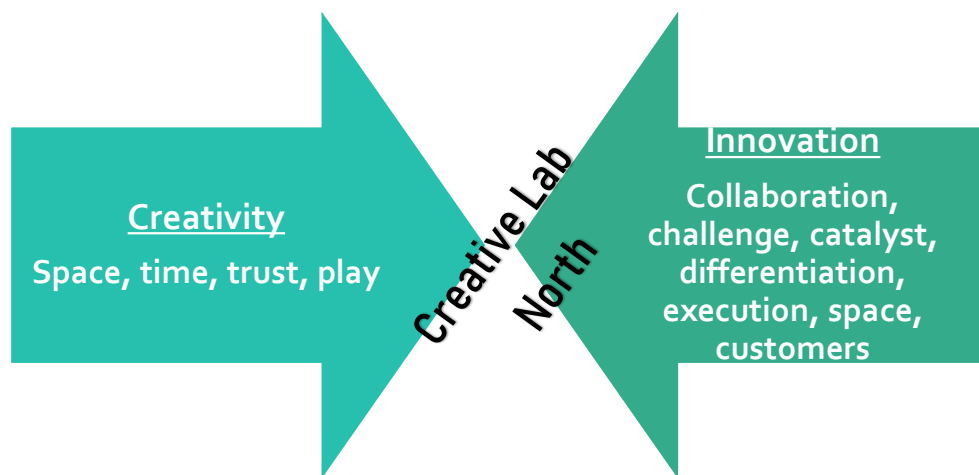
# Building the Right Eco-System

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TOWARD THRIVING ARTS AND CREATIVE  
INDUSTRIES IN THE YUKON

# Ingredients for Thriving Creativity and Innovation

There is a significant number of motivated artists/creatives and organizations that seek collaborative working spaces suited to support creation, production and presentation across the arts and creative sectors – and who seek growth in their own work and expansion of their industries.



## Essential catalysts:

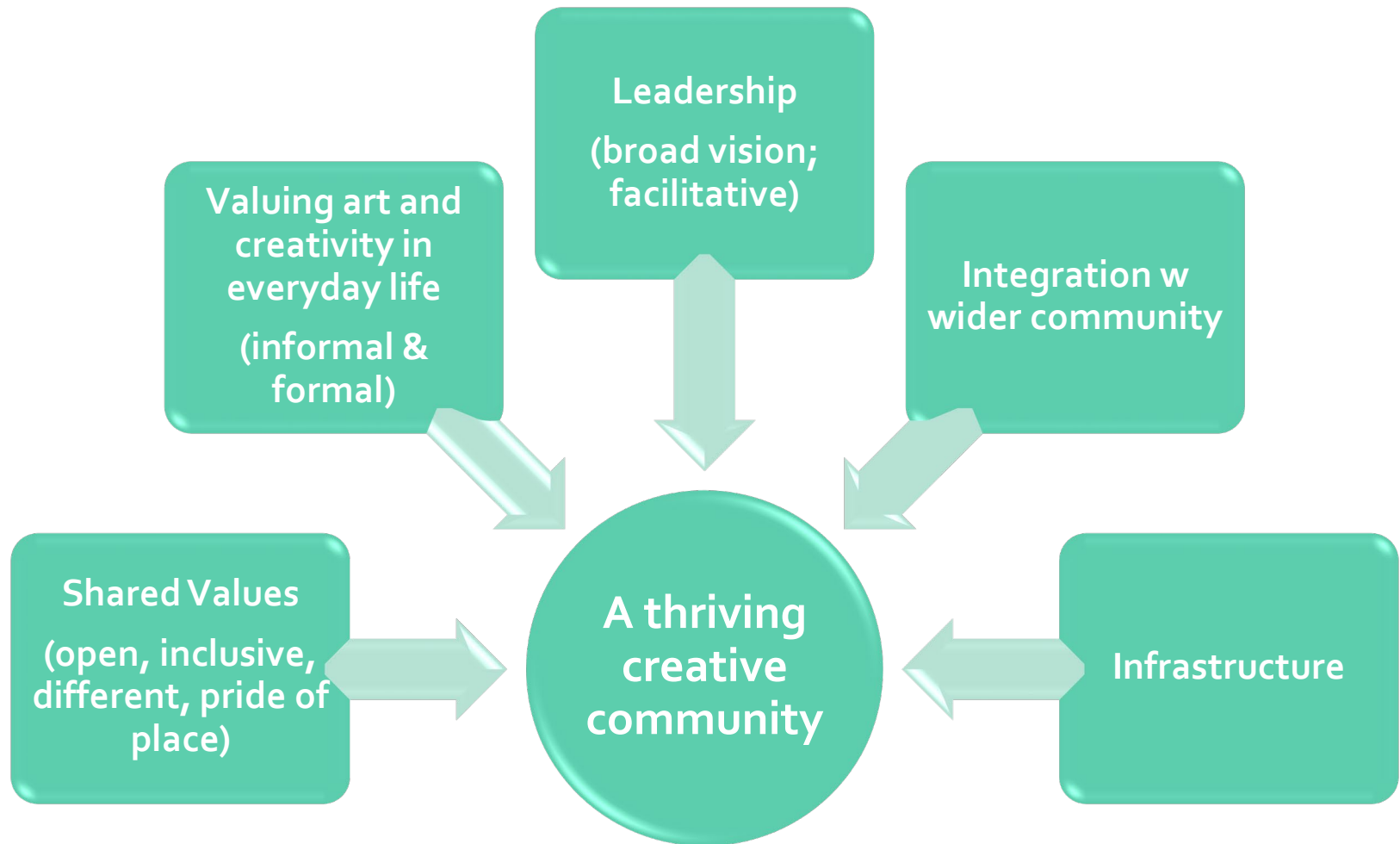
- Flexible and responsive space and time
- Encouraging rapid learning
- Solving real problems generates value
- Deliberate limitations to spark inspiration
- Tools and expertise in using them

<https://www.inc.com/larry-robertson/why-creativity-innovation-thrive-amid-chaos.html>

<https://medium.com/@ade3/ingredients-of-creativity-9f94cee9b3co>

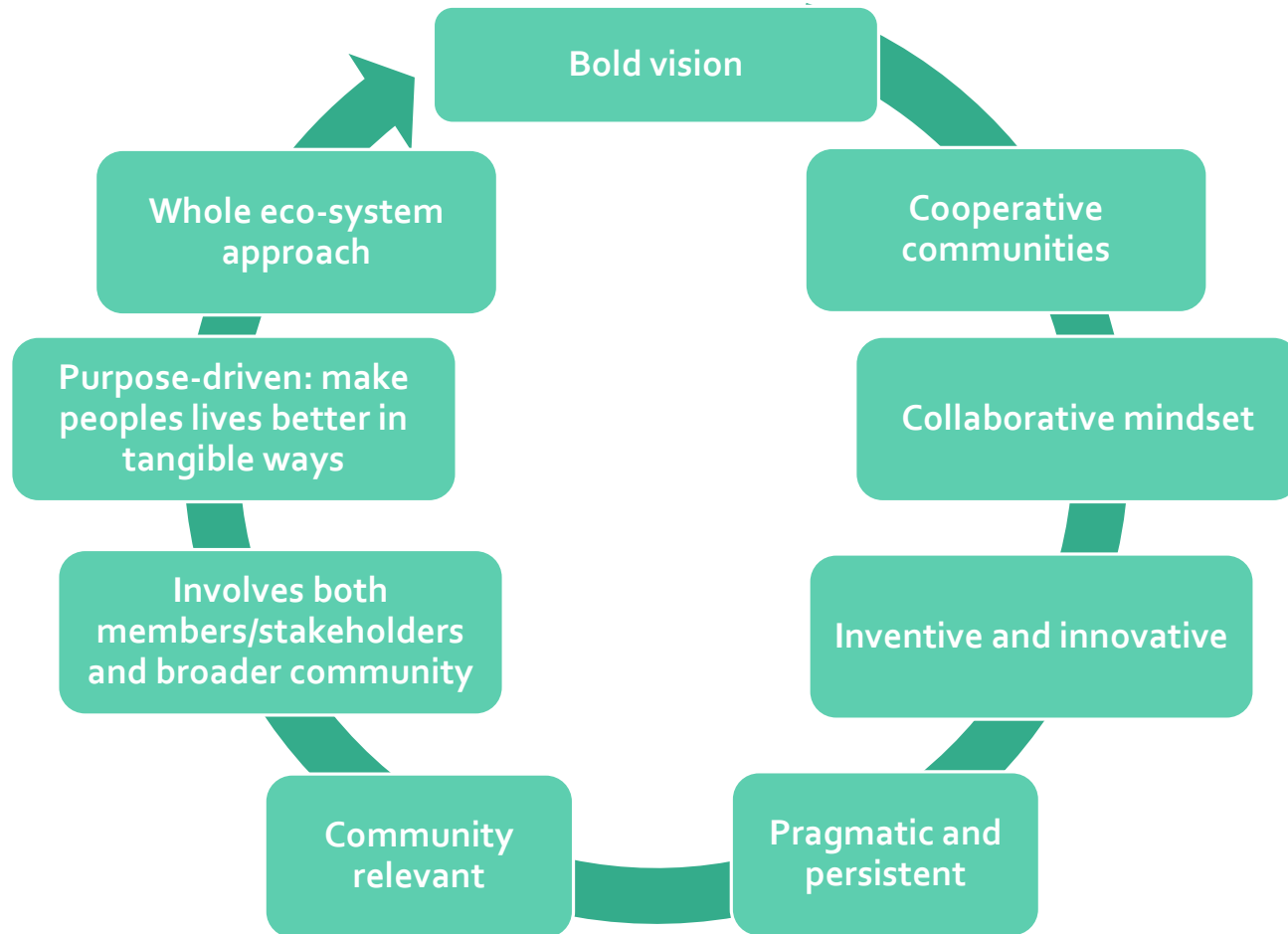
<https://articles.bplans.com/14-ingredients-innovation/>

# Specific qualities of the creative eco-system to fuel vibrant, successful communities



Sources: Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities Through Arts and Creativity, Creative City Network, 2009  
Study by Metropolitan Regional Arts Council in Minnesota in 2004

# Hallmarks of effective arts/creative leadership in small communities



Source: Exploratory research for keynote on Growing a Sustainable Performing Arts Eco-System, Inga Petri @ SPARC Symposium 2016

# Benefits of Fostering Arts and Creative Industry

Year-round

Not seasonal



Private sector

Not government



Diversify economy

Not cyclical



More export-oriented businesses

Not only serving local business, but bringing new outside revenue in

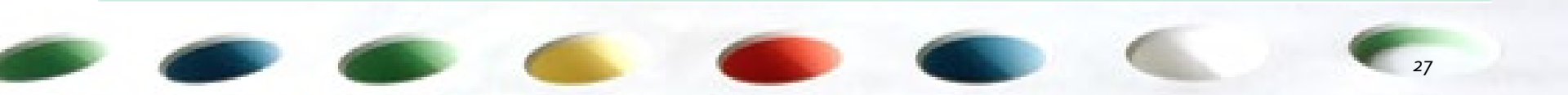


Better quality of life, creative and cultural expression and experiences



Increase tax base - Resident attraction

More than seasonal tourism attraction





# Thriving Creative Communities

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**FACILITIES ARE AT THE HEART OF  
THRIVING ARTS AND CREATIVE  
COMMUNITIES**



# Wells, BC

- **Cariboo Gold Rush, Barkerville, 1868**
  - 5,000 max population
- **Wells eclipsed it by 1930s Gold Rush**
  - Company town, Cariboo Gold Quartz Mine
- **Founder Fred Wells built Sunset Theatre for the benefit of the community in 1934, privately owned and operating today**
- **Churches turned galleries**
- **Population ~250**
- **100,000 tourists annually**
- **Mining ongoing**







# Wells, BC: Arts. History. Adventure.

- Island Mountain Arts at centre of thriving arts community
  - Summer School of the Arts 1977 (175 students)
  - Int'l Harp School and Tony Onley Artists' Project
  - ArtsWells Festival Of All Things Art 2004 (2,000+)
  - Artist residences in new building 2015
- Friends of Barkerville Society
- 13 other community organizations



*ArtsWells: Festival of All Things Arts, Photo by Mary Matheson*

# Haliburton County, Ontario

- **18,000 people (growing)**
  - Cottage Country 2.5 hrs from Toronto
  - 21,000 private dwellings
- **Very wide range of practicing artists and arts and creative organizations**
  - Arts Council
  - Festivals
  - Performing Arts
  - Visual Arts and galleries
  - Studios
  - Applied Arts
  - Media Production
- **Fleming College Haliburton School of Art and Design ensures large supply of professional and teaching artists**
- **Haliburton County Community Co-operative**
  - 1998 Problem: How to create new wealth in the community that could be re-invested in initiatives that benefit the community.
  - Mandate to encourage, develop and support entrepreneurial initiatives that contribute to the social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being of Haliburton County and its residents.
  - Strong arts, creative and cultural focus
  - Impact beyond its size
    - Incubated SPARC – Supporting Performing Arts in Rural Communities, now an Ontario-wide network with national reach



# Salt Spring Island, BC

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- In 1858 African Americans came to SSI to escape California's discriminatory laws
- Population 11,500
- Very high density of practicing professional and community artists
  - Salt Spring Island Arts Council (1970) supports and promotes the arts through education, events, partnership and advocacy in the Applied, Literary, Media, Performing and Visual Arts
    - Mahon Memorial Hall (built in 1904; capacity 200 standing & 120 seated)
    - National Art Prize, artist residences, gallery, school program
  - Arts Spring (1999) – 11,800 sq foot community arts centre with 259 seat (6,600 sq foot) theatre hosting more than 300 events annually
- Property tax levy provides secure public support to both organizations
- Current initiative among local arts groups to buy a decommissioned school and create a major arts hub, working and presentation space because artists don't have adequate spaces available to them elsewhere which is stifling their work and career development

# Kinngait (Cape Dorset), Nunavut

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- Population 1,400 - Hudson's Bay Trading Post since 1913
- In 1957, a graphic arts workshop in Kinngait was established, a program sponsored by the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. It was considered a way for the community to generate income by adapting traditional art forms to contemporary techniques.
  - Since the 1950s, Kinngait has been a centre for drawing, printmaking, and carving. Kinngait is the most artistic community in Canada, employing 22% of the labour force.
- Dorset Fine Arts was established in Toronto in 1978 as the wholesale marketing division of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative. The Co-operative is in Kinngait, Nunavut and is unique among the Arctic Co-operatives for its focus on the arts and artists of the community. The Annual Graphics Collection from Kinngait has been released since 1959 and the Co-operative also represents many acclaimed sculptors and drawing artists. Sales and exhibitions of prints, drawings and sculptures are made through the Dorset Fine Arts showroom in Toronto to galleries around the world.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kinngait>

# KIAC, Dawson City

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- **Dawson City**

- Similar to Wells, BC in terms of gold rush history, building a theatre quickly and engaging in arts and cultural activities, large seasonal tourist population
- 1998 – found KIAC as a way to move toward an arts-based economy, away from cyclical industry, i.e. mining and gold-rush-related tourism
- School of Visual Art – a partnership between TH FN, KIAC and Yukon University
- Arts education and creation, production and presentation spaces – pioneering, no limits spirit persists
- Hosting culture – capacity / scale limits us

- **Yukon is on its way with KIAC, Dawson City, Yukon Arts Centre, Arts Underground, Yukon Artists @Work in Whitehorse, Northlight Innovation and First Nations Cultural Centres**

- Yukon is also poised for significant growth by focussing on creative, arts and cultural industries and taking enabling strategic action

